

Linebaugh

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Historical Sketch
of the Vandalia, Ohio,
United Brethren Church
1838-1912

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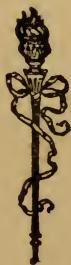
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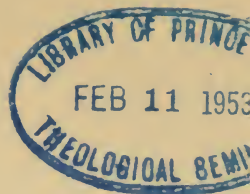
**Historical Sketch of the Vandalia, Ohio,
United Brethren Church**

1838—1912

By

Rev. N. L. Linebaugh, B. D.





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Preface

HISTORY has always been educational. It has shaped the destinies of nations and individuals. By means of it many have achieved greatness, and others have been inspired.

Human intellect wants to know things for itself. It reaches back into the past in order that it may bless the future. We profit by the mistakes of the past, and build better than our forefathers.

This little historical sketch is sent forth with the hope that it may inspire the people of our church to do and dare for God, that which our fathers never dreamed could be done. They builded well. They laid an abiding foundation. God bless them! But to-day the call comes for more efficient leaders in all departments of the church. With this call comes the demand for better equipment of church buildings. Let us pray the Lord to open our eyes to the needs of this optimistic hour and hasten to strengthen the walls of Zion.

I want to acknowledge the aid given by Rev. A. W. Drury, D.D., my esteemed friend, and professor of Bonebrake Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio, for many facts prior to 1859. Also Rev. J. C. Miller, Lebo, Kansas; Rev. J. L. Swain, Germantown, Ohio; Joseph Wilhelm, Muscatine, Iowa, (now 97 years of age); Mrs. Elizabeth A. Brandenburg, Los Angeles, California; Mrs. Maria Taylor, Arcanum, Ohio; C. W. Eby, Corbin, Kansas; together with those of this community who have given me many interesting facts. In the compiling of this history the question was not, What have I to write, but what things are of the greatest importance?

(N.L.L.)

THE history of United Brethrenism in the Miami Valley had its origin in 1805 when Martin Shuey and Andrew Zeller came into Montgomery County and located south of Dayton.

It was on July 22, 1810, that Christian Newcomer came to Lewis Kemp's home. Bro. Kemp was a United Brethren and lived four miles east of Dayton. He had come into the Miami Valley to find out the condition of the United Brethren people. On Aug. 6, 1810, a Conference was held in Montgomery County, in German Township, at Bro. Andrew Zeller's home. Thirteen preachers and exhorters were present. Here it was resolved that a circuit be formed, and Thomas Winter, Henry Evinger and Samuel Man gave themselves up freely to travel it. This was the first session of the Miami Annual Conference. In 1811 there was no Conference. But on Aug. 23, 1814, there were two districts instead of one in the Conference. Bro. Andrew Zeller was the Presiding Elder in the Miami District.

From 1812 down to 1829, the year preceding his death, Christian Newcomer, who had been made a bishop in 1813, made a tour of the country north of the Ohio River. Out of nineteen visits, he came every year into the Miami Valley except six times. In 1829, his last visit, he came to the home of Geo. Hoffman, five miles north of Dayton, and preached

there. Thus this saint of God must have passed many times through Butler Township.

“The first church built north of the Ohio River was a log church erected in 1815, on a farm owned by Bro. Bonebrake, one half mile east of New Hope. The next church built was also of logs and erected on Clear Creek, about two miles from Springboro, prior to 1828. In 1829 the church was built at Germantown.” (Dr. A. W. Drury.) The brick church of Vandalia, the first of its kind north of the Ohio River, and the fourth to be built by the United Brethren in the Miami Valley, was erected in 1839. Thus the Vandalia church is older by at least six years than any of the Dayton churches. “The Miami Chapel Church which is the oldest United Brethren Church in Dayton was erected in 1846.”

Vandalia has been attached to many circuits during its three quarters of a century of existence. In 1837 the Stillwater Circuit was formed, and the following year the class was attached to that circuit. “At that time the circuit included Fredricksburg, Vandalia, West Milton, Burtner’s (five miles north of Dayton), and other points north of the Dayton and Eaton Pike, and sometimes Liberty, Johnsville, Farmersville, and other points south of this pike.” In 1841 it had eighteen appointments; in 1842 there were twelve with a membership of 300; in 1843 it had forty-one with 475 members.

For eighteen years the class was kept on the same circuit. Then (1856), Vandalia and Wells were detached and added to Miami Chapel station, and the classes were then called Miami Circuit. The following year, (1857), the Stillwater Circuit’s name was changed to West Baltimore Circuit, and Vandalia and Wells were put with this circuit. In 1859

Vandalia was placed on Beavertown Circuit. In 1862 a new Miami Circuit was formed and Vandalia was put on that circuit. By 1865 the class was commanding enough to be recognized and from that day to the present time it has been called Vandalia Circuit.

Two Annual Conferences were held here. The 67th in August, 1876, with Bishop John Weaver presiding; and the 84th in August, 1893, with Bishop J. S. Mills in the chair.

The first meeting place of the United Brethren in this locality was held in the barn and house on the farm of Christian Shupp. This farm is on the Springfield Road. It is east of the Dayton and Troy Pike about one-fourth mile. The farm is owned at present (1912) by Christ Helke.

Rev. J. C. Miller says, concerning the beginning of the class, "It was in the year 1838, that my father built the barn for Christian Shupp, a local minister. As soon as the barn was enclosed, in the month of June, Father Shupp said 'We must now have a meeting,' which resulted in a great revival. I am of the opinion the revival referred to was the beginning of the Vandalia United Brethren Church."

Present opinion claims the same fact. Bro. Wm. Wells, and his sister, Mrs. S. S. Dodson, who lived just a half mile south of the Shupp farm, and Mrs. H. H. Cassel state that that "big meeting" was the beginning of the class. Besides Mrs. Michael Bennert says, "My parents attended that meeting and they often spoke of those who were converted at that time."

Until the church was built the preaching was regularly held in the homes of Christian Shupp, Jno. Beard, M. Coover and his two brothers, Jacob Steves, Benjamin Wilhelm, and

others. Thus a foundation was being laid which has resulted in a strong organization.

From all possible information the opinion is that the first United Brethren Church was erected late in the year 1839 or early in 1840, with a possible preference given the former date. This building was erected of red brick. A portion of the rear wall may still be seen in the present building. The house was forty-three feet long and thirty-five feet wide. The belfry was of the school house type, and was on the rear of the church. It held a brass bell that could be heard for several miles. Sometime before the erection of the new church this bell was cracked, but it was rung as long as the old church stood. There were two entrances to the building in the front. Before each door was a platform eight feet square. The church inside had a high pulpit platform, the seats were high-backed, and a partition was made in the centre row of benches, for in those days the women sat on one side of the church and the men on the other.

At first the Methodists were given the privilege to hold services in the church. But they soon became too few to have a service, and as Rev. Geo. Hoffman, who for a time held membership in both the Methodist and United Brethren denominations, said, "Methodists did not grow well in Butler Township."

The Lutheran people also worshiped in the church for many years, until a serious question arose. In the Quarterly Conference of Oct. 22, 1864, one can read this, "The question was then taken up, Shall we at Vandalia Chapel give way to our Lutheran Brethren to preach in our house every fourth Sabbath in the fore-noon as heretofore, being it comes in con-

flict with our appointment at this place?" The trustees were left to decide the question. How it was settled can best be judged by this significant fact that the same year (1864) the Lutheran church was built.

For many years our church had a financial struggle. Dr. A. W. Drury says that in the Conference minutes of 1848-49 there is a reference made as to whether the Vandalia church ought not to be sold to pay the debt. And at the same Conference a subscription was taken to relieve the church from its embarrassments and perils. In 1850 the minutes state, "Vandalia meeting house to be settled up." Henry Kumler, Jr., was made solicitor for the church. In 1851 a collection was taken at the Miami Conference to help the church, and the same year L. P. Jones was released from his agency for Vandalia meeting house. Thus this historic structure was saved to the denomination.

On Dec. 11, 1842, Benjamin Wilhelm and his wife Sarah, sold to the United Brethren trustees, Christian Shupp, Joseph Dunham, and John Shupp, the present lot No. 24 and a three-fourth acre of ground in the south end of Vandalia for a cemetery. The price paid was \$600. (See Deed Book Q. 2, page 49, Dayton, Ohio.) A second deed was made Jan. 28, 1850. It says, "being the same premises deeded Dec. 11, 1842 to Christian Shupp, John Shupp, and Joseph Denham, then trustees of said church, which deed was never recorded in the records of Montgomery County and was lost or mislaid and cannot be found. Wherefore this deed was made to the present trustees and their successors in office." The trustees were S. H. Coover, Isaac Coover, and Samuel Taylor. (See Deed Book Q. 2, page 368.)

From 1859 down to the present time a Quarterly Conference record has been faithfully kept. In 1859 the charge had seven appointments and the salary was fixed at \$375. They were Beavertown, Vandalia, Wayne Chapel, Aleys, Montgomery, Alexandersville, and Beardshears. By 1861 the salary was raised to \$650, and \$150 worth of provisions. There were eleven appointments and two preachers. In 1865 Little York was with the circuit.

On Jan. 25, 1868, "the propriety of building a new church at Vandalia was discussed, and it was then moved, by D. J. Brandenburg, that there be a meeting in three weeks at Vandalia to see what could be done." It was nearly three months later when the trustees met. Three of the board were present, and some officers of the church. "Rev. J. C. Miller opened the meeting by prayer and then reading several portions of Scripture relative to church building. D. J. Brandenburg then spoke of the necessity of a different house of worship. Bro. R. Sunderlain then spoke in favor of making an effort. Next Bro. C. Schievets spoke of the necessity of having the means secured before tearing down the old church. Bro. Jno. Beardshear then spoke very much in favor of a new house." A committee of seventeen were appointed to solicit funds.

The year 1869 witnessed the tearing down of the old church, except a portion of the rear wall, and the erection of the new. Rev. J. L. Swain was the aggressive pastor, but Rev. J. C. Miller, who resided in Vandalia, took the new enterprise in hand and saw that it was successfully done. The present church is a little longer than the old building, being fifty-nine feet long by thirty-five feet wide, and has a vestibule attached.

On Nov. 12, 1870, the treasurer had received \$3,011.23 and had paid out \$3,065.75.

In ten years the house needed some repairs. The steeple was built and other improvements made. The trustees, Bros. A. Brentling, S. S. Dodson, and C. W. Eby, hoped that the people would furnish the means to do the work. These repairs were made at a cost of \$265.38 which was paid in June, 1879.

On Dec. 18, 1886, a very significant thing was done. The church at Piqua had some serious difficulty with its officials. The Presiding Elder read a paper before the Quarterly Conference "praying the Vandalia charge to elect a board of trustees for the Piqua United Brethren Church." This was accepted and Bros. Wm. McKee, S. W. Keister, and C. W. Eby were elected. The result was that our work in Piqua was saved to the church.

In July, 1895, certain other improvements were made to the church. An entire new floor was put in, a new roof was put on, the Ladies' Aid Society "carpeted the church and also provided new pulpit furniture"; new windows of art glass were secured; the walls were repapered; pews were put in the place of the uncomfortable benches; and a furnace was installed. The treasurer, Bro. E. O. Rankin, paid out \$1,770.62 for these improvements.

The bell, which is the second in use in the history of the church, was cast by Wanduzen and Tiff, Cincinnati, Ohio, at the Buckeye Bell Foundry in 1879.

The church was incorporated Feb. 4, 1892, as "The Vandalia Church of the United Brethren in Christ," and was recorded July 11, 1892. (See Vol. 2, page 155, Montgomery County, Ohio.)

THE PARSONAGE.

The present parsonage is the result of a meeting held March 19, 1864, when "a motion prevailed that the erection of a parsonage be submitted to a board of trustees." Nothing more was done until Dec. 2, 1882, when "the following committee were duly elected to inquire into the practicability of the following questions:

1. Whether the circuit will build a parsonage?
2. If so, where locate?
3. Buy or build?
4. How pay for same?

F. P. Grimes, H. H. Bond, Wm. Powel, M. Coover, M. C. Miller" (committeemen).

This committee became active after the Quarterly Conference of Sept. 8, 1883, gave it instructions to procure the additional means needed as early as possible "and buy a parsonage in order that the circuit may have their minister reside among the people." Three months later, Dec. 8, 1883, the committee "had examined a property in Vandalia owned by Samuel North and deemed the property cheap for a parsonage at the price which he offered it."

But it was not until the circuit was driven into the place where it was impossible to rent a house for the preacher that anything definite was done. This condition prevailed early in 1900, when Rev. A. Dunkelberger was sent to the circuit by the Conference. On March 31, 1900, a board of parsonage trustees were elected consisting of Geo. Anderson, E. H. Eidemiller, Mrs. M. C. Miller, Mrs. Sella Coover, Mrs. E. O. Rankin, Andrew Parsons, and A. Underwood.

On June 14, 1901, the pastor reported a debt of \$135 on the parsonage, and Sept. 20, 1902, the parsonage was reported free of debt. The house cost \$1,398.21 and including the barn, walks, etc., the total cost was about \$1,650.

On July 8, 1905, the board of parsonage trustees was dissolved and the church trustees assumed its control.

The lot No. 26, on which the parsonage was built, was bought of J. W. Wells and wife for the sum of \$150. "Provided said lot be used for the erection of a dwelling for a parsonage." The deed was recorded Dec. 5, 1901. (See Deed Book 241, page 304.)

THE HENRIETTA HALL.

It was after the death of Henrietta, the wife of J. W. Wells that he bought a piece of property, lot No. 5, on the National Road in Vandalia and remodeled it. To this house he gave the name of "Henrietta." It was to be a memorial to his devoted wife. On Sept. 24, 1907, the house was set apart for the use of certain definite societies in Vandalia. He made two deeds, one to the Ladies' Aid Society and the Woman's Missionary Society jointly. The other was to the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. These deeds were given on certain conditions which were not well defined. Fearing that some difficulty might arise in the future as to the ownership of the property, the church trustees, in 1910, requested these three organizations to deed their shares directly to the trustees of the United Brethren Church. (See Church Record for the proceedings.)

Bro. J. W. Wells and his *second* wife willingly agreed to the change in ownership. Accordingly, new deeds were drawn

up and signed by the proper parties. The property is now in the possession of the church. These deeds were recorded Sept. 7, 1910. (See Deed Book 320, pages 548, 549, and 550.)

Thus to-day there is in the name of the church trustees the following property:

1. The church with its lot.
2. The parsonage with its lot.
3. The Henrietta Hall with its lot.
4. The old cemetery.

CIRCUITS AND PASTORS

(The dates are for the beginning of the Conference year.)

Stillwater Circuit

- 1838—Henry Goodridge
- 1839—A. Hetzler
- 1840—Wm. Collins
- 1841—Wm. Collins and James Eacles
- 1842—James Eacles
- 1843—James Eacles and J. Hill
- 1844—A. Hetzler, Jno. Slief, and J. Hill
- 1845—A. Hetzler, Jno. Slief
- 1846—F. Bonebrake, and one to be supplied
- 1847—Wm. Ault
- 1848—Wm. Ault and A. Hetzler
- 1849—Wm. J. Cochran
- 1850—H. Toby
- 1851—W. W. Coons
- 1852—G. L. Gilbert
- 1853—M. Toby
- 1854—Peter Hetzler
- 1855—Peter Hetzler

Miami Circuit

- 1856—Wm. R. Rinehart

West Baltimore Circuit

- 1857—P. C. Hetzler, W. Long-acre, and H. Surface
- 1858—Swain Corson

Beavertown Circuit

- 1859—Swain Corson
- 1860—J. M. Marshel and J. C. Miller
- 1861—J. C. Miller and G. C. Warvel

Miami Circuit

- 1862—J. C. Miller
- 1863—B. W. Day
- 1864—B. W. Day

Vandalia Circuit

- 1865—J. Kemp
- 1866—J. C. Miller
- 1867—J. C. Miller

- 1868—J. L. Swain
- 1869—J. L. Swain
- 1870—E. H. Caylor
- 1871—S. M. Hippard
- 1872—J. D. Holsinger
- 1873—J. D. Holsinger
- 1874—F. M. Fowler
- 1875—S. S. Holden
- 1876—D. N. Howe
- 1877—J. C. Miller
- 1878—J. C. Miller
- 1879—J. L. Swain
- 1880—J. L. Swain
- 1881—J. L. Swain
- 1882—Wm. McKee
- 1883—H. J. Mulholland
- 1884—H. J. Mulholland
- 1885—W. J. Pruner
- 1886—W. J. Pruner
- 1887—E. W. Bowers
- 1888—E. W. Bowers
- 1889—C. J. Burket
- 1890—C. J. Burket
- 1891—J. L. Swain
- 1892—G. W. Arnold
- 1893—G. W. Arnold
- 1894—S. M. Hippard
- 1895—S. M. Hippard
- 1896—G. W. Hamilton
- 1897—G. W. Hamilton
- 1898—G. W. Hamilton
- 1899—H. A. Sechrist
- 1900—A. Dunkelberger
- 1901—A. Dunkelberger
- 1902—A. Dunkelberger
- 1903—A. Dunkelberger
- 1904—H. H. Yohe
- 1905—E. Fowler
- 1906—E. Fowler and A. D. Williams
- 1907—B. P. S. Busey
- 1908—B. P. S. Busey and A. W. Denlinger
- 1909—N. L. Linebaugh
- 1910—N. L. Linebaugh
- 1911—N. L. Linebaugh

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DAYTON, OHIO

Officials

Bishop—Rev. W. M. Weekley, D.D.
Presiding Elder—Rev. C. W. Kurtz, D.D.
Pastor—Rev. N. L. Linebaugh, B.D.

TRUSTEES.

Jno. M. Seabrook, Pres.
Michael Bennert, Sec. Dr. W. H. Riley, Treas.
David Lippman Edward Surrel

FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Ralph Hatton

DISTRICT STEWARDS.

West—H. H. Cassel East—P. E. Smith

SABBATH SCHOOL.

H. H. Cassel, Supt. T. J. North, Ass. Supt.
Ralph Hatton, Sec. Robert Jackson, Treas.
Alice North, Pianist Gilbert Attwood, Chorister

CRADLE ROLL.

Mrs. Ada Hatton, Pres.
Prof. Jno. E. Smith }
P. E. Smith } Executive Committee
Ed. Cotterman }

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR SOCIETY.

Ralph Wells, Pres.
Mrs. Gilbert Attwood, Vice Pres. Roland Wells, Sec.
Winsor Witmer, Treas. Ester Rankin, Pianist

LADIES' AID SOCIETY

Mrs. Joseph Brandon, Pres.
Mrs. N. L. Linebaugh, Vice Pres. Mrs. E. O. Rankin, Sec.
Mrs. P. E. Smith, Treas.

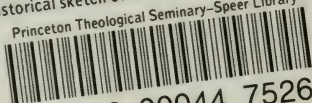
WOMAN'S MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION.

Mrs. Chas. Wells, Pres.
Mrs. E. O. Rankin, Vice Pres. Mrs. J. M. Seabrook, Sec.
Mrs. Geo. Shoup, Treas.

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